

A CODICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS  
OF THE ILLUMINATED *AKATHISTOS*  
TO THE VIRGIN

(MOSCOW, STATE HISTORICAL MUSEUM, *SYNODAL GR.* 429)

G. M. PROXOROV

## I. COMPOSITION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The manuscript, measuring 175 by 240 mm., consists of seventy-eight parchment leaves. Its wooden binding is covered with black stamped leather, its back with dark green leather. Five copper bosses are fastened to the front cover (one in each corner and one in the center); there are two bosses on the back cover. The middle part of the upper and lower sides of the boards is beveled. As the edges of the leaves have been trimmed, an entry on the top of folio 62 is partly cut off. The manuscript's binding appears to be old and to date from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, but was probably restored at a later date.

In addition to the *Akathistos*, the manuscript contains an anthology of hymns by various authors. The *Akathistos* itself (which scholars at first attributed either to George Pisides<sup>1</sup> or to the Patriarch Sergius<sup>2</sup> of the seventh century, and now are inclined to attribute to Romanus the Melode<sup>3</sup>), is followed by the *Acoluthia* to the *Akathistos* Hymn (Ἀκολουθία τοῦ Ἀκαθίστου ὕμνου)<sup>4</sup> (fols. 35–43), by the Canon of the Annunciation, written in part by John of Damascus and in part by Theophanes of Nicaea<sup>5</sup> (fols. 43<sup>v</sup>–55), and by the Consolatory Canon to the Most Holy and Immaculate Lady, the Mother of God (Κανὼν παρακλητικὸς εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν δέσποιναν Θεοτόκον τὴν ἀμόλυντον)<sup>6</sup> (fols. 55–61<sup>v</sup>), by an unknown author. This canon may have been written with a specific icon of the Virgin in mind, whose representation we see in the last miniature (fig. 1). The canons are followed (fols. 62–66) by the *troparia*, or, more specifically, by two series of strophic *troparia* by Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos. We shall discuss them later. Our *miscellaneus* closes (fols. 67–71) with a Contritional Hymn with an alphabetic acrostic (ᾠδᾶριον κατανυκτικὸν κατ' ἀλφάβητον); it is "The anacreontic Composition by Leo, the pious Emperor and Philosopher," that is, Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912).<sup>7</sup>

The codex consists of twelve quires of varying sizes. The first (fols. I–II) and the last (fols. 72–75) quires are blank, as are the first folio of the second quire and the verso of the last folio of the next-to-last quire (fols. III and 71<sup>v</sup>). The rest of the codex, containing the text, can be easily divided into three parts. The first part comprises the text of the *Akathistos*, beginning on the second folio of the second quire (from this point on the pagination given below is in Arabic numerals), and covers thirty-four folios (quires II–VI). All the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bogoslužebnye kanony na grečeskom, slavjanskom i rusškom jazykax*, III (St. Petersburg, 1856), 77–94.

<sup>2</sup> W. Christ and M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* (Leipzig, 1871), 14.

<sup>3</sup> E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1961), 191–97.

<sup>4</sup> *Incipit*: Βουλὴν προαιώνιον. . . .

<sup>5</sup> *Bogoslužebnye kanony*, I (St. Petersburg, 1855), 57–72.

<sup>6</sup> *Incipit*: Τῶν λυπηρῶν ἐπαγωγαί. . . . For icons of the Virgin Ἀμόλυντος, see, e.g., *Musée Byzantin, Athènes. Le monde des grands musées*, 25 (December 1970), 49 (sixteenth to seventeenth century).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Christ and Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca*, 48–50.

# ANALYSIS OF *SYNODAL GR. 429*

Part of Manuscript	Quire Number	Quire Diagram	Number of Lines per Page	Contents
Part One	I		12 (on pages void of minia- tures)	Fols. I–III: empty. Fols. I–34v: <i>Akathistos</i> Hymn.
	II			
	III			
	IV			
	V			
	VI			
Part Two	VII		18	Fols. 35–43: <i>Acoluthia</i> to the <i>Akathistos</i> Hymn. Fols. 43v–55: Canon of the Annunciation. Fols. 55–61v: Canon to the Immaculate Virgin (ἀμόλυντος).
	VIII			
	IX			
	X			
Part Three	XI		17	Fols. 62–65 and 65–66v: <i>Troparia</i> by Philotheos Kokkinos. Fols. 67–71: Poem by Leo VI. Fols. 71v–75: empty.
	XII			

T = Stub; ∅ = folio cut out; M, M = miniature on the recto or verso respectively

twenty-three miniatures and the twenty-three figural initials executed in colors on a gold background are found in this section. Here the script is large: pages without miniatures contain only twelve lines; those with miniatures have four or five lines. All the quires, except quire **VI** (fols. 32–34), are regular, while in the remaining parts of the manuscript there is no quire that does not have single folios with stubs. The last folio (fol. 34) of the first part of the manuscript is single because the miniature pertaining to the twelfth *oikos*, and originally standing between folios 31 and 32, was cut out. The text of the first part of the codex ends on folio 34<sup>v</sup> with the colophon Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον, “God’s gift.” The remaining two-thirds of the page under the colophon is left blank (fig. 2).

The second part of the codex comprises folios 35–61 (quires **VII–X**) and contains the *Acoluthia* to the *Akathistos*, the Canon on the Annunciation, and the Canon to the Immaculate Virgin. Here the ink becomes lighter and the script smaller; in this part there are eighteen lines to a page. Three quires of this part (**VII**, **VIII**, and **IX**) consist of three sheets and two single folios each with stubs. Quire **X** is made up of three single folios with stubs. This might create the impression that the three last folios of the quire were cut out. However, the fact that the colophon on folio 61<sup>v</sup> (fig. 3) is identical to the one at the end of the first part of the manuscript—Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον—shows that such was the original composition of the quire.

The whole text of the third part of the manuscript, containing the *troparia* of Patriarch Philotheos and the anacreontic hymn of Emperor Leo VI, is contained in quire **XI**, which is a *quinio* (fols. 62–71). This quire has three double and four single folios (see p. 244, *infra*), with two “centers” between folios 65 and 66, and 68 and 69. In this part there are seventeen lines to a page. The third part, as well as the manuscript itself, ends on folio 71, exhibiting the familiar colophon Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον (see fig. 4).

In sum, the codex consists of disparate sections executed at different times; this is most clearly indicated by differences in ink and in varying numbers of lines per page. The presence of irregular quires with single folios is also characteristic of our manuscript.

## II. SCRIPT

We may tentatively identify the scribe of the manuscript. His hand—the same in all three sections, as shown by Archimandrite Amphilochius<sup>8</sup>—seems to be the same as that of Joasaph, the famous scribe from the Constantinopolitan monastery τῶν Ὁδηγῶν.<sup>9</sup> This man (at one time erroneously identified with the ex-Emperor John Kantakouzenos, who was his contemporary and

<sup>8</sup> Arxim. Amfiloxij, *O licevom Akafiste Božiej Materi vtoroj poloviny XIV veka Moskovskoj Sinodal'noj biblioteki No. 429* (Moscow, 1870). Cf. also *idem*, *Paleografičeskoe opisanie grečeskix rukopisej XIII i XIV veka*, III (Moscow, 1880), 118–23. The author offers a table with various samples of our manuscript's script and a complete list of all types of individual letters occurring in it.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule im Kloster τῶν Ὁδηγῶν,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 51 (1958), 15–40, 261–87.

also bore the monastic name of Joasaph)<sup>10</sup> was active in the second half of the fourteenth century and in the first part of the fifteenth. Over thirty extant dated manuscripts copied by him—exclusively scriptural texts and theological and liturgical works—span the years between 1360 and 1405/6.<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, Joasaph copied *Parisinus Graecus* 1242, an illuminated manuscript containing the theological works of John Kantakouzenos. E. Voordeckers has convincingly shown that this manuscript was executed by order of the royal author himself as a gift to his friend and ideological ally Nicholas Kavasilas.<sup>12</sup> *Mosquensis Synodal Gr.* 429 and *Paris. Gr.* 1242 have several features in common: the script, the miniatures, which impart a rich character to both manuscripts, and—partly—the presence in them of works by leaders of the Hesychast faction, Kantakouzenos and Philotheos Kokkinos respectively.

Our identification of the scribe runs counter to the criterium established by Linos Politis; in his view, all manuscripts copied by Joasaph bear his name and as a rule are dated.<sup>13</sup> Their colophon reads invariably: Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον καὶ ἰωάσαφ πόνος, “the gift of God and the toil of Joasaph.” While it is correct to conclude that manuscripts showing identical script and signed by Joasaph were copied by him, we cannot exclude the possibility of the existence of a manuscript copied by Joasaph but not signed by him. Even the list established by Linos Politis indicates that colophons written by Joasaph do not always include his name. For instance, the liturgical scroll of 1370 has a short colophon Θ(εο)ῦ τὸ δῶρον<sup>14</sup> identical to that of *Synodal Gr.* 429, along with the full colophon (bearing Joasaph’s name and the date). Moreover, we can adduce examples of manuscripts definitely copied by Joasaph (such experts on Greek script as E. Ė. Granstrem and B. L. Fonkič agree with me on this point) which do not contain the scribe’s colophon. I have in mind the *Taktikon* (prayer book and missal) of John Kantakouzenos, a parchment manuscript in the State Historical Museum, Synodal Collection, No. 261 <sup>279</sup>(CCXVI).<sup>15</sup> The only colophon found here, which is repeated twice (fols. 3 and 100), is the framed name and title of the owner and commissioner of the manuscript: Ἰω(άννου) τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτορος Ῥωμαίων τοῦ Καντακουζηνοῦ —“Of John, the most pious Emperor and Ruler of the Romans, Kantakouzenos” (see fig. 5).

It should be noted that the hand of Joasaph, both in manuscripts signed by him and in those which we attribute to him, belongs to a class known as “liturgical” script. It is reminiscent of the older, traditional type of script originating in the tenth or eleventh century, and differs from individualized

<sup>10</sup> Cf. L. Politis, “Jean-Joasaph Cantacuzène fut-il copiste ?” *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 14 (1956), 195–99.

<sup>11</sup> Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule,” 27–33.

<sup>12</sup> E. Voordeckers, “Examen codicologique du codex *Parisinus Graecus* 1242,” *Scriptorium*, 21 (1967), 288–94.

<sup>13</sup> Politis, “Jean-Joasaph Cantacuzène,” 197; *idem*, “Eine Schreiberschule,” 19.

<sup>14</sup> Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule,” p. 28, no. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Arxim. Vladimir, *Sistematičeskoe opisanie rukopisej Moskovskoj Sinodal’noj (Patriaršej) Biblioteki. I, Rukopisi grečeskie* (Moscow, 1894), 361.

“literary” hands of Joasaph’s time in being more refined, though stereotyped.<sup>16</sup> Even within the category of “liturgical” script, the hand of Joasaph is notable for its superior quality, regularity, flow, elasticity, and almost impersonal perfection. The scribe was a past master in his field and a professional of the highest order, and it is natural that the ranking members of Byzantine society clamored for his services. But it is precisely this high professional standard—the artistry, the strict adherence to a specific style and ideal, the mastery of graphic methods—which make identification so difficult. The scribe used several methods of tracing every letter: for example, the *beta* appears both in the common form of β and as υ; the *rho* has its long downward hasta turned either to the right or to the left; the *delta* appears both in the minuscule and uncial forms. The scribe can form the same letter in different ways on one page: thus the hasta of the *lambda* or *chi* may be straight or slightly curved.<sup>17</sup>

Both Joasaph and the scribe whom we believe must be identified with Joasaph never wrote the standard colophon in the same manner but changed the strokes, the relative positions of the letters, and the connecting lines between them.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, as Linos Politis has shown, Joasaph was not the only scribe who used this formula in his colophons; having originated in the fourteenth century, the formula was passed from scribe to scribe until as late as the seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup>

The only invariable features characteristic of the manuscripts of Joasaph, and of those which we attribute to him, are the style, the predilection for elastic strokes, and the flourishes of the pen contrasting with the exact, elegant, but strong ordinary rendering of lines. But even these flourishes and strokes vary. And even they are not an individual trait but the expression of a style of script. In short, it is difficult (but not impossible, if a style of script is studied in its entirety) to establish a series of constant and reliable features, which would enable one to identify the scribe in those cases where he does not identify himself. On the other hand, if one compares the script of *Synodal Gr.*

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule,” 17–18.

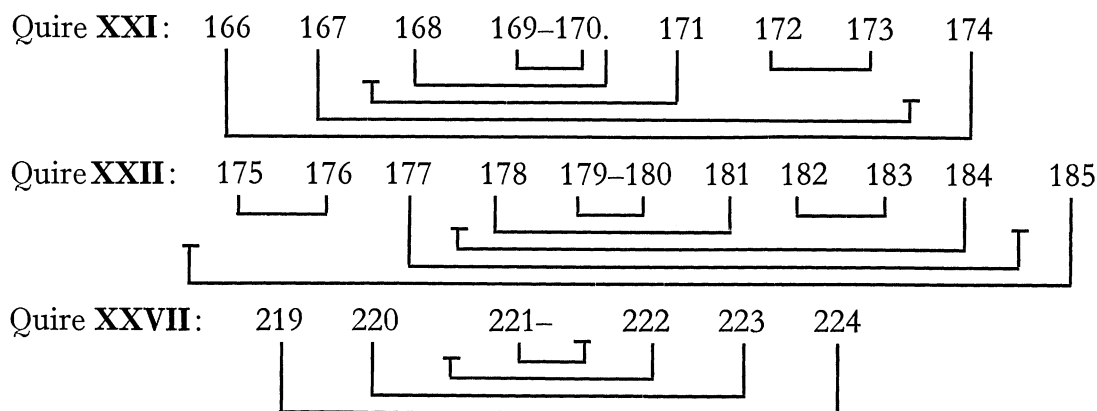
<sup>17</sup> When I was studying the hand of this scribe, I chanced upon a Greek scroll in the Manuscript Section of the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR which seems also to be by him. I am taking this opportunity for publishing a sample of the script from this scroll (see fig. 6) and some information concerning it. It is a manuscript from the collection of the former Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, No. 2, containing the Liturgy of Basil the Great, mutilated at the beginning and at the end: *incipit* . . . πρόσδεξαι εἰς τὸ ὑπερουράνιον σοῦ θυσιαστήριον, *desinit* καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ σοῦ ὅτι παράδοξις . . . (I am indebted to I. N. Lebedeva for having identified this text.) The parchment scroll, on a wooden rod, measures 491 by 28 cm.; the width of the margins is 7 cm. The ink is brown; the initials, light brown (on account of light ink or, more likely, of faded vermillion). The letters of the verses seem “suspended” from horizontal lines—just as in *Synodal Gr.* 429. The script, rather large, is surprisingly similar in size to the script of the *Akathistos*, i.e., to the first illustrated section of *Synodal Gr.* 429. The supposition that this scroll was also copied by Joasaph is further strengthened by the fact that out of the thirty-two manuscripts bearing the name of Joasaph and recorded by Linos Politis (see note 9, *supra*), twelve are liturgical scrolls.—The manuscript of the Gospels copied by Joasaph in 1371, and formerly kept in the Treasury of the Troice-Sergieva Lavra, is at present at the State Lenin Library in Moscow (call number F. 304–111, No. 26 [8667]). I owe this information to the kindness of Mr. D. V. Dragunskij, who is at present studying this manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Compare this formula (figs. 2, 3, 4) with reproductions of Joasaph’s colophons in A. Turyn, *Codices Graeci Vaticani saeculis XIII et XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi* (Vatican City, 1964), pl. 205-e.

<sup>19</sup> Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule,” 262–82.

429 and 279 with each other and with published samples of Joasaph's hand,<sup>20</sup> one cannot find any reliable traits which distinguish them; consequently, one is left with an impression, approaching certainty, that one is dealing with the same hand in all cases. Even if it should turn out that these similar scripts belong to several different persons, one will have to conclude that these persons were more or less contemporary and were equally outstanding products of one school, namely, of the scriptorium of the monastery τῶν Ὁδηγῶν.

To the information obtained from the comparison of the script we can add observations on those structural features which both *Paris. Gr.* 1242 and *Synodal Gr.* 279 share with *Synodal Gr.* 429. *Paris. Gr.* 1242 has three such features. First, it, too, consists of parts executed at different times and ending with the scribe's colophons (two of the four colophons are dated 1370 and 1375, respectively). Secondly, it, too, contains irregular quires. Thirdly, just as in *Synodal Gr.* 429, the scribe who copied *Paris. Gr.* 1242 used single folios.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, the *Taktikon* of Kantakouzenos (*Synodal Gr.* 279), unlike his *Works* and the *Akathistos* manuscript, is not divided into parts, nor does it contain colophons written by the scribe himself. But both the presence, in the last third of the manuscript, of irregular quires using single folios and certain features of these quires call to mind *Synodal Gr.* 429. Here is, for example, the analysis of some of the thirty quires of *Synodal Gr.* 279:



As we can see, quire **XXI** of *Synodal Gr.* 279, which is similar to quire **XI** of *Synodal Gr.* 429, consists of two inner sections of uneven size—bound by one double folio, or sheet, of parchment. The right-hand section of quire **XXII** is similar in its makeup. Quire **XXVII** (and there are others similar to it in *Synodal Gr.* 279) contains two single and two double folios, this being close, in its makeup, to most quires of the second part of *Synodal Gr.* 429. These features suggest, in my view, that all three manuscripts are due to the same hand.

<sup>20</sup> H. Omont, *Facsimilés des manuscrits grecs datés de la Bibliothèque Nationale du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1891), pl. xcv; Voordeckers, "Examen codicologique," pls. 29, 31. (This comparison was made under the kind guidance of E. È. Granstrem, to whom I am deeply indebted.)

<sup>21</sup> I was unable to examine this manuscript in person, but the diagram of its first two quires given by Voordeckers ("Examen codicologique," 290) shows that folios 1 and 4 are single; Voordeckers also makes clear that the first quire of the manuscript was the last to be composed.

Finally, we can form an opinion on the position of the scribe of *Synodal Gr.* 429 in the religious struggle of his time. At the beginning of the third part of the manuscript he wrote (at the top of fol. 62): Κ(ύρι)ε Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστ)ῆ Ὑιῒ Θε(ο)ῦ ἐλέησον. The note, which was somewhat damaged due to the trimming of the manuscript's pages, is the famous "Jesus prayer," which the Hesychasts defended against the attacks of Barlaam and his followers at the time of the theological disputes in the middle of the fourteenth century. The scribe of *Synodal Gr.* 429 surely was a member of the Hesychast faction, the camp of the ex-Emperor Kantakouzenos and Patriarch Philotheos. But the monk (and later the priest-monk) Joasaph of the monastery τῶν Ὁδηγῶν, who was Kantakouzenos' scribe on more than one occasion, had to be, of course, his supporter. So even in this case there is a coincidence.

### III. A MYSTERY PLAY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

When we compare the various parts of *Synodal Gr.* 429, we soon realize that codicological differences among them are due to differences in their content, or, more precisely, to the different attitude of the manuscript's executor to the hymns contained in it. The oldest of these hymns, of unique artistic value and highly revered in the Orthodox Church—the *Akathistos* Hymn to the Virgin—is copied in the first place in large letters on double folios, with no attempt to economize on space. It is richly decorated with illustrations and initials. The *stichera* and canons in the second part of the codex are also a part of the regular church liturgy.<sup>22</sup> They, too, are highly revered, but not as much as the celebrated *Akathistos* Hymn. This section is more ordinary; the initials were written in vermillion by the scribe himself. Here and there the stubs of single folios are visible. Similar to it but even more ordinary is the third part—the irregular quire **XI**, complex in its makeup, containing the *troparia* by Patriarch Philotheos and the poem by Emperor Leo. As far as I know the hymns of the third part of the manuscript have never belonged to the annual cycle of church liturgy.

Of all the works in the manuscript the *troparia* by Philotheos are closest in time to the date when it was written. Even more curious is the following circumstance: these two series of strophic *troparia* represent only two-thirds of the original hymnographic triptych which is usually contained in its entirety in manuscripts, both Greek and Slavic. The first part, which is missing here, is the prayer of repentance with an alphabetic acrostic to the Blessed Virgin, petitioning her to act as an intermediary between the supplicant and Christ, to whom the former does not dare to turn directly. In the Slavic translation

<sup>22</sup> "It is impossible to assume that the first part of the manuscript originally stood all by itself; this is because the *stichera* and Canons contained in the second part, especially the first Canon, are substantively linked to the *Akathistos*: the latter could not have existed without the Canon." Cf. *Fotograficheskie snimki miniatjur grečeskix rukopisej, naxodjaščixsja v Moskovskoj Sinodal'noj (byvšej Patriaršej) biblioteke. Izd. Moskovskogo Publ. Muzeuma*, I (Moscow, 1862), 14.

this section bears the following title: *Tropari poxvalny k presvjatej Vladyčice našej Bogorodice, ispovedanie i molbu imušči, im že kraegradesie: az, vede. Podoben: Čestnejšu Xeruvim*, i.e., "Troparia of praise to our most Holy Queen, the Mother of God, with confession and supplication, their acrostic being a, v; *Prosomoion*: 'more honored than the Cherubim.'" <sup>23</sup> The second part, according to its Greek title, is: "Troparia, constituting the dialogue of the Blessed Virgin with our Lord Jesus Christ, containing her supplication and mediation. Persons of the dialogue: the Lord and the Blessed Virgin. The Blessed Virgin begins. The work of Philotheos, the Patriarch." <sup>24</sup> The acrostic here is alphabetical, but in reverse order (from *omega* to *alpha*). As the title indicates, this is the dialogue in verse between the Blessed Virgin and Christ in which she intercedes with her Son on behalf of the suppliant and succeeds in obtaining forgiveness for him. The third part of the triptych (the acrostic of this part contains the name of the author, Philotheos) is the reply of Our Lady to the "servant," i.e., to the suppliant, that his prayer has been heard and answered, but also an admonition concerning his future behavior. <sup>25</sup> The absence of the first part, i.e., of the *troparia* directed to the Virgin, impairs the whole work—why does a dialogue between the Virgin and the Lord take place, whom does it concern, and to what supplication of the "servant" does the Lady reply? Why is the beginning of the triptych missing here?

Could this mean that the third part of the codex was added to the first two in a damaged and incomplete condition, without a beginning? The composition of quire **XI** shows that this is not the case: if the beginning of the triptych were missing, there would be a single folio, or a lacuna in the text, at the end of that quire. In fact, the text of quire **XI** starts (at the top of the recto) on the first half of the double outer folio of the quire; it ends on the second recto of the outer folio, while the verso, i.e., folio 71<sup>v</sup>, is blank. This means that no text is missing at the end, nor, therefore, at the beginning, of the quire. It also indicates that the first set of the *troparia* of Philotheos was omitted deliberately. Is it not because of the proximity of the *troparia* to the preceding hymns in the manuscript?

Actually, the missing *troparia* by Philotheos represent an appeal to the Virgin, and, as their title indicates, are a praise, confession, and supplication. But do not the works preceding the extant *troparia* of Philotheos represent also an appeal to the Virgin with praise, confession, and supplication? Thus, these hymns—the *Akathistos*, the *stichera* of the *acoulouthia*, and the Canons taken together—stand for the first part of Philotheos' triptych. They represent a supplication to the Virgin which she listens to, discusses with her Son, and to which she finally gives a reply. What at first glance seemed to be merely a

<sup>23</sup> Cf., e.g., Lenin State Library, *Fond* 304 (Troice-Sergieva Lavra), No. 758 (1635), a *miscellaneous* of the early fifteenth century, fol. 90.

<sup>24</sup> Τροπάρια διάλογος ὄντα τῆς παναγίας Θεοτόκου πρὸς τὸν Δεσπότην Χριστόν· δέησιν αὐτῆς περιέχοντα καὶ μεσιτείαν· τὰ δὲ διαλόγου πρόσωπα, Δεσπότης καὶ Θεοτόκος· προλέγει ἡ Θεοτόκος. Ἡ ἀκρόστιχος α,β ἀντίστροφος, καὶ ἐν τῷ τέλει ταύτης, Φιλοθέου. Ποιήματα δὲ τοῦ κυροῦ Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου." *Incipit*: ὦ Δέσποτα Κύριε καὶ Υἱέ. . .

<sup>25</sup> *Incipit*: Φωνῆς πάντως ἤκουσας.

more or less accidental compilation of church hymns, now appears to be a kind of hymnographic whole, a composition of religious songs, a choral play.

But how is the anacreontic canticle by Leo the Wise related to this complex whole? Unlike the other hymns in this manuscript, the canticle is not dedicated to the Virgin. In form, it is a poem with an alphabetical acrostic; in content, it is a monologue of a spiritually distressed man, who turns not to Heavenly powers but inwardly, to his own soul. Nevertheless, this canticle is a very suitable conclusion of the entire composition. In the last series of Philotheos' *troparia*, in which the Virgin replies to the "servant," she advises him precisely "to hearken to his soul's voice" and "to avoid the cause of his former sins." And the inner monologue of the poem by Leo the Wise, directed toward the soul, indeed realizes this advice "to hearken to the soul's voice," and is thus a direct continuation of the "play." This appeal to the soul, which occupies twenty-three stanzas of the anacreontic hymn, in the twenty-fourth stanza turns into a petition of the distressed man to the Trinity to be granted time for penance:

Ὡ δέσποτα τῶν αἰώνων  
Πάτερ, Ὑιὲ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα,  
ἡ τρισυπόστατος μία  
καὶ ἀδιαίρετος φύσις,  
δός μοι καιρὸν μετανοίας  
πρὸς λύσιν ἀμπλακημάτων.<sup>26</sup>

O Lord of ages,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
one hypostatic unity of three Persons  
and indivisible nature,  
grant me time to do penance,  
for deliverance from sin.

This stanza seems to be somewhat corrupt in our manuscript: instead of αἰώνων, "ages," we read ἀπάντων, "all kinds" or "all"; μία and φύσις have changed places; ἀμπλακημάτων has been substituted by its synonym ἀμαρτημάτων. But, most important of all, it is preceded and followed by two additional stanzas, which are not by Leo VI, and which also begin with *omega* (see fig. 4). The first of these contains six lines, just as Leo's stanzas do. It is a prayer to the Savior:

Ὡς θησαυροὺς τῆς ἀβύσσου  
καὶ οὐρανοῦ κατα(ρ)ράκτας  
ἀνέωξας, κατακλύζων,  
Σῶτερ, τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ Νῶε,  
οὕτω καὶ νῦν κατάκλυσσον  
τὸν βόρβορον τῶν παθῶν μου.

Just as Thou hast opened  
the resources of the abyss  
and great streams from heaven,  
flooding the earth in the time of Noah,  
so too now flood, O Savior,  
the mire of my passions.

The last stanza exceeds the length of the stanzas by Leo the Wise by two lines and again proves to be an appeal to the Virgin, a *theotokion*.

Ὡ δέσποινα Θεοτόκε  
σπεῦσον, βοήθει μοι τάχος.  
ἡ γὰρ ἀκμὴ τῆς ἀξίνης  
ὥς ἄκαρπον ἐκφοβεῖ με,

Our Lady, Mother of God,  
hurry, aid me quickly,  
since the edge of the axe  
frightens me, who is barren,

<sup>26</sup> Christ and Paraniakas, *Anthologia Graeca*, 50.

καὶ ἡ φυρὰ τῆς δρεπάνης  
ὥς ἄωρον ἐκδεδίττει,  
ὁ δὲ λικμήτωρ τὴν καῦσιν  
ὥς ἄχυρον <κατ>ἄλει μοι.

and the swing of the sickle  
horrifies me as I am not ripe,  
and the Winnower [i.e., the Devil]  
grinds out fire [of Hell]  
for me like chaff.<sup>27</sup>

The closing *theotokion*, unusual in form, was added, or so it seems, to complete the entire hymnographic composition dedicated to the Virgin, by returning to its main theme.

My conjecture is that the entire contents of *Synodal Gr.* 429 were sung in church at one time, as a single mystery play. If this is admitted, then such a performance occurred on March 25, on the feast of the Annunciation, since it is on this day that the *Akathistos* to the Virgin<sup>28</sup> and, of course, the Canon of the Annunciation were sung in Byzantium. Actually, the words τῷ αὐτῷ μηνὶ κε', "on the twenty-fifth of the same month," stand next to the title of the Canon in the manuscript. It contains no other indications concerning the date of performance of the hymns. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the entire mystery play took place on March 25, or possibly on the eve of that day at vespers.

#### IV. THE AUTHOR-PATRON

The presence, in a specific place in the manuscript, of two out of three interrelated series of *troparia* by the fourteenth-century Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos is my main argument for postulating that the whole manuscript constitutes a hymnographic composition. In addition to *Synodal Gr.* 429, I am aware of only one other Greek copy of these hymns in the libraries of the Soviet Union; it occurs in a collection of works of Philotheos, contemporary with the author.<sup>29</sup> These *troparia* were not retained in the liturgical services and were never published. Only in Russia do they seem to have enjoyed some popularity—in translation, of course. In our manuscript, they appear in the third and most modest part of the whole; however, they appear next to such classics of Christian hymnology as the works of the author of the *Akathistos* and of John of Damascus—an honorific position for any hymn, let alone a work contemporary with the manuscript itself. What is more, the *troparia* by Philotheos occupy a key position, for they turn the whole into a unified mystery

<sup>27</sup> I am grateful to I. N. Lebedeva for assistance in this translation. The translation of the last two verses does not completely satisfy either of us. [For "the Winnower" standing for the Devil, cf. Ioh. Climacus, *Scala Par.*, 29.19. The correction <κατ>ἄλει, restoring the verse, is suggested *exempli gratia* and supported by Exod. 32:20—I.Š.]

<sup>28</sup> Cf., e.g., C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (= *Wiener Byzantinische Studien*, 5) (Vienna, 1968), 17.

<sup>29</sup> I am referring to *Mosq. Synodal Gr.* 431 <sup>349</sup>/<sub>(CCCXXVI)</sub>. Arxim. Vladimir, *Sistematičeskoe opisanie*, 651–52, assigns it to the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. However, this paper manuscript has the following watermarks (cf. A. Mošin and Seid M. Traljić, *Vodeni znakovi XII i XIV vijeka*, I–II [Zagreb, 1957]): (1) three pears no. 4364 = a. 1360/70; (2) arbalet of type no. 243 = a. 1350/70; (3) pomegranate no. 4201 = a. 1375; (4) pomegranate no. 4189 = a. 1368, 1370; (5) heraldic lily no. 651 = a. 1361; (6) bell of type no. 2867 = a. 1360; (7) cross of type no. 3599 = a. 1371, or of type no. 3996 = a. 1363. Thus the watermarks fall between the years 1350 and 1375. The manuscript was probably put together at the end of the sixties or the beginning of the seventies of the fourteenth century.

play in four acts, the first in four scenes, as it were. When we consider, furthermore, the deluxe character of the manuscript (although, judging by the economical way in which its parchment was used, it was produced in straitened circumstances), we come to the conclusion that it was produced during the lifetime of Philotheos Kokkinos (d. in 1377), or soon afterward, in some milieu close to him. The most probable compiler or, more precisely, the person who committed the manuscript was the Patriarch himself. He is known not only as an author but also as an editor, who rearranged compositions of existing liturgical works: he was the last to edit parts of the liturgy (the arrangement of the offices of the priest and the deacon) and recompose the Gospel with commentary by selecting didactic sermons on Gospel readings for Sundays and feast days. Philotheos appears as the most likely ecclesiastic to have commissioned such a costly manuscript during those years of poverty. It is highly unlikely that anyone would have commissioned such a manuscript after 1376. This was the date of one of the *coups d'état* which resulted in Philotheos' deposition and the exile in which he ended his days soon thereafter. The decades that lie between 1376 and Byzantium's fall were even more difficult. And though the Church honored the memory of this active Patriarch<sup>30</sup> (his *Vita* is found among the Athos manuscripts),<sup>31</sup> his works were rarely copied again in Greek.

## V. THE PORTRAITS AND THE TIME OF THE EXECUTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

We have an unusual opportunity to test my hypothesis about the patron and the period of the execution of the manuscript. This is provided by one of the miniatures (fol. 28<sup>v</sup>; see fig. 7). It is an illustration to the twentieth strophe of the *Akathistos* and represents Christ standing in the center on a low footstool with a book in His hand and with two groups of people on either side. To the right of Christ we see two prelates wearing bright robes, and behind them monks in black cowls and brown mantles. The prelates, like all the other figures, are individualized. It is evident that the artist knew how to render the personal features of a human face. One of the prelates—the one in the more prominent position, closer to Christ—has his arms extended to Him in a gesture of prayer and presents a grave countenance. He is gray-haired and has a straight nose and a divided beard with distinguishable whiskers. The second prelate, standing behind him, has a black, rounded beard, a less prominent, turned-up nose, a larger but softer mouth, and a milder expression. He is gazing into the distance. If my previous conjectures are correct, then one of

<sup>30</sup> According to the *Synodicon* in Athens, *National Library* 356, a parchment manuscript of the fourteenth century, Patriarch Philotheos was commemorated on the Sunday of Orthodoxy for his defense of the true faith "by word, deed, teaching, sermons, and writings." Cf. A. A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiĭeskix rukopisej, xranjaščixsja v bibliotekax Pravoslavnogo Vostoka*, III. Εὐχολόγια (Kiev, 1901), 358.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Sp. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts of Mount Athos* (Cambridge, 1885), no. 153 manuscript no. 26 of the St. Paul monastery, nineteenth century; no. 6266 (manuscript no. 759 of the Panteleimon monastery, nineteenth century).

these ecclesiastics—and more likely the first one—would be the author of the *troparia* contained in the manuscript, the compiler of the mystery play, and the man who commissioned the manuscript.

Fortunately, there exists a basis for comparison. One of the miniatures of *Paris. Gr. 1242* (fol. 5<sup>v</sup>), already known to us, contains the likeness of Philotheos, executed during his lifetime. This miniature (fig. 8), as E. Voordeckers has demonstrated, serves as an illustration of the prologue to the *Refutation of Prochoros Kydones*<sup>32</sup> and depicts John VI Kantakouzenos presiding over the Council of 1351. On either side of the Emperor two men are sitting, wearing *omophoria* decorated with the characteristic blue crosses of the patriarch, even though in 1351 there was, of course, only one patriarch, Kallistos (1350–53 and 1355–63). Voordeckers has conclusively established that Philotheos would have been the other of the two who wore the patriarchal insignia, for he participated actively in the work and formulation of the Acts of the Council of 1351 and presided over the Council of 1368 at which Prochoros Kydones was excommunicated. He must have been Patriarch of Constantinople at the time of the execution of the miniature in *Paris. Gr. 1242*.<sup>33</sup> Naturally enough, the Belgian scholar was unable to determine which of the two Patriarchs depicted there was Philotheos and which Kallistos.

Let us examine the faces of the two. The Patriarch to the right of Kantakouzenos is a man with a grave expression on his face, with a Roman nose, an expressive mouth, and a divided gray beard with distinguishable whiskers. The Patriarch sitting opposite him, to the left of Kantakouzenos, has a black, rounded beard, an upturned nose, a wide and thick lower lip, and a distant or contemplative look. Although the style of the two artists differs and the beards of the Patriarchs in the Paris manuscript are considerably longer, with gray tinges in the beard of the second man, it is not difficult to correlate the two Patriarchs in the Paris codex with the figures in the Moscow one: the Patriarch to the right of Kantakouzenos is the one nearer to Christ in the *Akathistos* miniature, and that to the left of Kantakouzenos is the second ecclesiastic.

Now let us examine a peculiar trait of the Moscow miniature: it is the second prelate, the one with a black beard, who is wearing an *omophorion* with the blue patriarchal crosses. The place occupied by the prelates is contrary to their rank. This the painter could have done only by order of the man who commissioned the manuscript. If so, the person standing nearer to Christ in the miniature and extending his hands to him is surely Philotheos; moreover, Philotheos was not patriarch at the time of the execution of the *Synodal Gr. 429*. This means that the manuscript in question was executed either before Philotheos first ascended to the patriarchal throne vacated by Kallistos (i.e., before November of 1353), or during the interval between his two patriarchates (i.e., after January of 1355, when he had to relinquish his power to Kallistos after the abdication of Kantakouzenos, and before October of 1364, when he

<sup>32</sup> I published this Preface in my article "Publicistika Ioanna Kantakuzina 1367–1371 gg.," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 29 (1969), 334–36.

<sup>33</sup> Voordeckers, "Examen codicologique," 294.

was again chosen patriarch of Constantinople). The terminus of the latter period may be more precisely set in the summer of 1363—the date of the death of Kallistos, who, as I postulate, is depicted behind Philotheos in the miniature. It is highly unlikely that Philotheos would have dared to have himself placed, if only in a miniature, in front of the Patriarch, between the Patriarch and Christ, during the short timespan (1347–53) when he was still Metropolitan of Herakleia. After early 1355, however, that is, after his involuntary removal from the patriarchal throne, such an arrangement would be quite understandable. There are other observations which point in favor of the period between 1355 and 1363 as the most likely date of our miniature.

Let us consider in the same miniature the group of monks standing behind the prelates to the right of Christ. There are five of these monks and one is placed more prominently than the others, standing in the center, between Philotheos and Kallistos. Together, these three figures form a triangle. Behind the prominent monk, two pairs of other monks are visible. The one closest to the center of the miniature does not look directly at Christ but at the monk in the center—ostensibly so as not to turn his back to him as Philotheos does to Kallistos. Blue robes are visible beneath the garb of the monk in the center; his striking face bears a concentrated and severe look. In this person it is not difficult to recognize John Kantakouzenos, the emperor turned monk, whose likeness is well known to us from the double portrait in another miniature of *Paris. Gr. 1242*.<sup>34</sup> The Moscow miniature is thus the second portrait of the “most pious Christ-loving Emperor and Autocrator of the Romans, John Kantakouzenos, who assumed the monastic name of Joasaph the monk in the divine monastic order,” as he called himself after his abdication and tonsure, which took place at the end of 1354. As to their date, the Moscow miniature is from seven to twenty years earlier than the portraits of the Paris manuscript.<sup>35</sup>

Of the figures to the left of Christ the face of one stands out because of its Mongolian features; it is the face of a young man with head uncovered and right hand extended toward Christ, its palm turned upward. It is possible to make a guess about this man's identity as well. In 1360 John Kantakouzenos wrote an *Apology* directed against the Moslems, in response to a letter received by his pupil, a young Christian Turk, from his former coreligionists. In the Preface to this *Apology*, Kantakouzenos offers the following information about the Turk: “A certain Turk approaching manhood, who was of noble birth and considerable wealth and who was a teacher (ἐπιτήδευμα διδασκαλικὸν μετῴν)—he was an ardent adherent of the law of his fathers and wished to prove to all as well as he could that Muhammed and his laws were sublime—received the Light of true piety, condemned the religion of his fathers, and recognized the true God. Leaving all his possessions, he went to the pious Emperor of the Romans. This was John Kantakouzenos. And he was welcomed by him, and since God had called the Emperor to the contemplative life, he followed in his footsteps and, becoming himself a monk and taking the name of Meletios,

<sup>34</sup> Fol. 123; reproduced, e.g., in A. Grabar, *Byzantine Painting*, trans. S. Gilbert (Geneva, 1953), 184.

<sup>35</sup> I date our manuscript to the years 1355–63; *Paris. Gr. 1242* was executed between 1370 and 1375.

he benefited greatly from the sermons of the Emperor, who formed his soul and taught him the ways of Christian piety.'"<sup>36</sup> In my opinion, it is this young Christian Turk from the circle of the Emperor-monk who is depicted in our miniature, joyfully extending his hand to Christ. To be sure, the young man is not a monk here. My hypothesis could still be upheld if the miniature reflected the situation which obtained soon after 1354, when Kantakouzenos had already taken monastic vows and the young Turk had chosen Christianity over Islam and arrived in Constantinople, but had not yet become the monk Meletios.

To summarize, the study of *Synodal Gr.* 429 has enabled me first, to establish Joasaph of the monastery τῶν Ὁδηγῶν as its scribe; second, to define the contents of the manuscript as a hymnographic mystery play; third, to propose that Philotheos Kokkinos, the author of the manuscript's *troparia*, was the compiler of the whole and the person who commissioned the manuscript; fourth, to date the manuscript to the years 1355–64, that is, to the nine-year interval between Philotheos' two patriarchates, and suggest that it was executed toward the beginning of this interval; and fifth, to identify three, possibly four, faces in one of the manuscript's miniatures—the face of Philotheos himself, that of the Patriarch Kallistos, that of John-Joasaph Kantakouzenos, and, hypothetically, that of his Turkish disciple. For what purpose or for whom did Philotheos commission such a richly executed manuscript? I suggest that the codex was meant as a gift for his friend and suzerain John Kantakouzenos, whom we see depicted on the miniature in question in a prominent place between two high-ranking ecclesiastics and in the company of one of his closest followers.

Finally, I wish to venture one more suggestion. Since the zoomorphic initials of *Synodal Gr.* 429 were executed in the late fifties or early sixties of the fourteenth century, the zoomorphic initials in the Moscow group of Russian Gospels from the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century—the Gospels of Koška, Xitrovo, Morozov, and Andronik—need not be connected with the Western manuscript tradition, as V. N. Lazarev thinks,<sup>37</sup> but rather may be related to the Byzantine manuscript tradition of the fourteenth century. The artist who brought this type of initials to Russia may have had associations with the Hesychast milieu of Byzantium and its ecclesiastical élite, which revolved around John Kantakouzenos; in Russia he may have been in close contact with the highest Moscow circles. I am inclined to agree with Lazarev that this artist was Theophanes the Greek himself.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> PG, 154, col. 372.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. V. N. Lazarev, *Feofan Grek i ego škola* (Moscow, 1961), esp. 69–85.

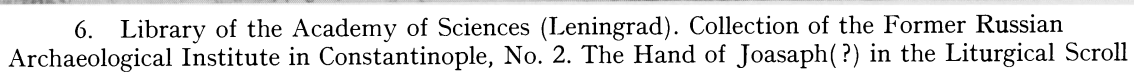
<sup>38</sup> I wish to adduce one more consideration in favor of this suggestion. The compositional type of the *Hypapante* on the iconostasis of the cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin, created by Theophanes the Greek, Proxor from Gorodec, and Andrej Rublev "does not occur elsewhere in Russian painting. However, this type does occur in the frescoes of the church of the Pantanassa in Mistra. This adds plausibility to the supposition"—in the words of M. V. Alpatov—"that Theophanes the Greek took a direct part in shaping the concept of the *Hypapante* in the cathedral of the Annunciation"; cf. M. V. Alpatov, "Ikona 'Stretenija' iz ikonostasa Troickogo sobora Troice-Sergievoj Lavry," *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury*, 14 (1958), 559 and fig. 10. Mistra was the appanage of the Kantakouzenoi for three generations, and John-Joasaph Kantakouzenos exercised considerable intellectual influence there.



1. Moscow, State Historical Museum, *Synodal Gr.* 429, the *Akathistos* Hymn, fol. 33v. The Last Miniature

[illegible]







7. Moscow, State Historical Museum, *Synodal Gr.* 429, fol. 28v.  
Illustration to the Twentieth Strophe of the *Akathistos* Hymn



8. *Paris. Gr. 1242*, fol. 5<sup>v</sup>. John Kantakouzenos Presiding at the Council of 1351